

Week Ending Friday, September 29, 2000

The President's Internet Address

September 22, 2000

Good afternoon. We Americans are truly fortunate to be living at such an exciting time. Computers and the Internet are revolutionizing the way we work, live, relate to each other and the rest of the world. They also have the potential to fundamentally transform and improve the way Government serves the American people. Today I want to talk about a major step we're taking toward that goal.

When I became President, there were only 50 websites on the entire World Wide Web. Today, there are almost 20 million. Under the leadership of Vice President Gore, we've made great progress bringing Government into the digital age. Instead of waiting in line, citizens can go on-line, to file their taxes, compare their Medicare options, and find good jobs. They can tap into the latest health research, change their address at the post office, and follow along with NASA's missions in outer space. And they can do it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

But with 27 million web pages of Government information now on-line and more added every day, finding the information or service you need can be frustrating. That's why I'm pleased to announce that today we're launching a new, one-stop website for Federal on-line information: firstgov.gov. It allows you, for the first time, to link to the Federal Information Service, or service you are looking for, without having to know the name of the agency or the program that offers it.

So, go to www.firstgov.gov, and you're just a few mouse clicks away from websites where you can apply for student loans or reserve a campground in a national park.

Now, when I first announced in June we would be creating firstgov.gov, I promised we would do so in 90 days. That was exactly 90 days ago. I am very proud of the Federal

employees who made this happen in Internet time. And I'm thankful to Dr. Eric Brewer of Inktomi. He's the entrepreneur who, with the help of Federal grants, created one of the private sector's most successful search engine technologies. Out of gratitude and patriotism, he developed and donated the search engine for firstgov.gov.

Now this website belongs to the American people. We've included a place for you to suggest improvements, and we're going to keep working on this site and on all of our Government websites. Firstgov symbolizes, I think, the kind of Government we need in the 21st century, one that empowers citizens to make the most of their own lives.

At the dawn of our Republic, Thomas Jefferson said, "America's institutions must move forward hand in hand with the progress of the human mind." Well, today, as the progress of the human mind races ahead, it's vital that we make sure our democratic institutions keep pace. And if we do, we can create a more perfect, more responsive democracy for the information age.

Thanks for logging on.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m. from the Roosevelt Room at the White House. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the President's Commission on Improving Economic Opportunity in Communities Dependent on Tobacco Production While Protecting Public Health

September 22, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign an Executive order establishing a new Commission to improve opportunities for tobacco farmers and their communities while continuing to protect public health. This action builds on the longstanding commitment Vice President Gore and I share to protect our children from

the dangers of tobacco use and protect individual tobacco farmers. Tobacco growers, like many other farmers, have confronted difficult economic circumstances these last few years as tobacco companies increasingly turn to foreign tobacco. We have supported several efforts over the years to protect tobacco farmers and to develop new opportunities for these growers and their communities. The Commission, which will make recommendations on ways to continue this work while protecting public health, is an important next step.

This new panel, the President's Commission on Improving Economic Opportunity in Communities Dependent on Tobacco Production While Protecting Public Health, will be cochaired by William Martin "Rod" Kuegel, Jr., the president of the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association, and Matthew Myers, the president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Both are leaders in their communities with proven records on bringing grower and health groups together on issues important to both. In 1998 they worked with a coalition of grower, public health, and religious groups to issue a statement of principles outlining their shared commitment to reducing disease caused by tobacco products and ensuring the future prosperity and stability of American tobacco farmers and farming communities. The work of this important new Commission will serve to further demonstrate that the goals of reducing youth smoking and protecting American farmers can be pursued together.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Executive Order 13168—President's Commission on Improving Economic Opportunity in Communities Dependent on Tobacco Production While Protecting Public Health
September 22, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment. (a) There is established the "President's Commission on Improving Economic Opportunity in Communities Dependent on Tobacco Production while Protecting Public Health" (the "Commission"). The Commission shall be composed of not more than 10 members to be selected by the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the President. The members may include tobacco producers and quota holders; public health experts; Federal, State, and local government representatives; and experts in agricultural economics and economic development.

(b) Two co-chairs shall be selected by the Secretary of Agriculture from the membership of the Commission. The co-chairs shall report to the President through the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Sec. 2. Purpose. The Commission shall advise the President on changes occurring in the tobacco farming economy and recommend such measures as may be necessary to improve economic opportunity and development in communities that are dependent on tobacco production, while protecting consumers, particularly children, from hazards associated with smoking.

Sec. 3. Functions. (a) The Commission shall collect and review information about changes in the tobacco farming economy and Federal, State, and local initiatives intended to help tobacco growers, tobacco quota holders, and communities dependent on tobacco production pursue new economic opportunities. The Commission may make recommendations concerning these, and any other, changes and initiatives that may be necessary to improve economic opportunity in communities dependent on tobacco production. It shall also consider the public health implications of such changes and initiatives, including the efforts to reduce youth smoking and tobacco-related health consequences in the United States and abroad.

(b) For the purpose of carrying out its functions, the Commission may hold hearings, establish subcommittees, and convene and act at such times and places as the Commission may find advisable.

Sec. 4. Reports. The Commission shall make a preliminary report to the President